WHEN WE WERE LITTLE

Children's Rhymes of Oyster Bay

MARY FANNY YOUNGS

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WHEN WE WERE LITTLE

THE LITTLE GREY HOMESTEAD

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Children's Rhymes of Oyster Bay

BY

MARY FANNY YOUNGS

With an Introduction by
The late THEODORE ROOSEVELT

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TO THE
GLORIOUS MEMORY
OF THE
LITTLE LAD IN THE DAISY FIELD

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PREFACE

WHEN we were little, we lived in an old gray house in Oyster Bay Cove, so close to the harbor that the high tides in the Spring and Autumn always flooded the dark, earth-floored cellar. For two hundred and sixty years the little old house has stood there, and in all that time has never gone out of the possession of the lineal descendants of the stanch old pioneer who built it. For that reason, the love of the old traditions, the old ways, the very rafters over our heads and earth beneath our feet, were not only, "bred in our bone," they were soul of our souls.

Until a very few years ago, the life in Oyster Bay was as simple in many respects as it had been for the past two centuries. Old ways of doing things were still our daily

usage, and as for the dear people who helped us with our work of house and farm, they were friends and helpers in very truth, loyal to us, and we to them. Although these happy, patriarchal days were passing, with the Victorian era, while the children of Sagamore Hill were growing up, there was still much of the old, sweet atmosphere left—there is some, even now, among "old Oyster Baysters!"—and of it all, the Sagamore Hill children were an active and well-loved part. They, too, as well as we older children from the little gray Homestead, dug clams, fished for horsefoot crabs, went to the blacksmith shop, and hid in the hay-mow, and on Sundays, watched the sparkling blue harbor through the open windows of the little church.

Therefore, when these rhymes about our childhood doings in the Cove, and the places and people we loved, were sent to the Colonel and Mrs. Roosevelt, to amuse them and their "grand-babies," their interest and their great kindness moved the

Colonel to write a friendly foreword, and Mrs. Roosevelt to lend some of her cherished pictures, making it possible for these simple rhymes to go out into the world coupled with the names of those happy Sagamore Hill children, who have since become the best and bravest types of American manhood and womanhood; and with the seal of kindly approval from the two noblest Romans of us all.

The rhymes were originally written for Harding Tremain Mason, and it is with his permission that they are printed, in loving tribute to "the kind hearts, the true hearts, who loved the place of old."

MARY FANNY YOUNGS.

GARDEN CITY, LONG ISLAND,
October, 1918.

POSTSCRIPT

Since the above preface was written, the dear Colonel has gone to his last resting place, on the hilltop by the harbor that he loved. All the more may these little rhymes bring back to those who love him the happy memory of the old days.—May, 1919.

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FOREWORD

Miss Youngs writes of the quaint, old-time Long Island life, of which not only her father and I, but she herself and my children, were part. It was not the life of the "summer resident." It was the life of those who lived winter and summer in the simple, pleasant houses, beside the shore or on the neighboring hills of the northern Long Island country. It is a lovely country. The coast line of the Sound is broken by cove and bay, and the salt marshes alternate with low tree-covered bluffs, and beach plums and bayberries and beach rosemary grow on the stretches of white sand. Back of the coast line come meadows and orchards, and in the rolling lands behind are pastures, and many ponds, and very rarely a brook.

The people who dwelt on these farms or who got their livelihood on the waters of bay and Sound, came from a stock which had been on the island for nearly three centuries. The life was what they had themselves developed. They had no traditions of any other. Their roots had been in the soil for generations.

It is with this life that Miss Youngs deals in her charming little poems, which tell of the work and the play of both grown-ups and children. Naturally they appeal very strongly to me; for I love the Long Island fields and woods, at all seasons; at the high tide of the year when the green foam of spring breaks into the deeper green of summer; and at the time of the glory of the sharp fall weather; and again when the bleak days are shortest and winter grips the land. And I love the old houses, from kitchen to garret, and the life that was once lived in them.

I hope these poems will also appeal to others; for our life was essentially the same

as all the old-fashioned life lived elsewhere in the open country; and this was fundamentally a simple and a wholesome life.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

SAGAMORE HILL,
August 15th, 1918.

WHEN WE WERE LITTLE

KATIE

THERE is no one like Katie that ever
I saw,
For she makes all my dresses and hats,
She knows all about flowers, and the queer-
looking stones,
And she helps me find names for the cats.

When I'm sick, she takes care of me, day-
times and nights,
And she knows how to drive like a man,
And she knows how to row, and she knows
how to sail,
And catch fiddlers for bait in a can.

She tells wonderful stories of horses and
things,
And a crow that she had for a pet,
And her beau is named Peter, but lucky
for me,
He hasn't come after her yet.

I'm afraid I'm too big for a regular nurse,
But she'll stay with me, always, I hope,
For I love her forever, although when I'm bad
She washes my mouth out with soap.

WEEK-DAYS

EVERY morning I go out
To see what Celia is about;
Then I go outdoors to see
What the weather's g'wine to be—
Then I go to feed the cats,
Then Grandma chases me with hats
And overshoes, to keep me dry.
Then I get away, and I
Run as quickly as I can
To go and help that nice hired man—
(Frank's his name) and from the mows
We pitch down hay to feed the cows.
I help him fill the mangers full—
Feed apples to old Bill the Bull
Who stands so quietly in his stall
And never chases me at all.
Then I go and feed the big
Grunting, rooting mother pig,

And all the little pigs get out
And scamper madly all about;
Then I feed the ducks, and then
Back to Celia go again,
And if she's making cake, you know,
Why, then I steal a piece of dough,
And when she chases me away
I go out in the field and play.
After dinner, now and then,
I go back to the barn again,
Or sometimes for a drive I go,
Or Katie takes me for a row,
Then I come back and have my tea—
Then, sometimes, Grandpa reads to me,
Then, off to bed—Now don't you say
I have an awful busy day?

Out in the Field

SUNDAY

SUNDAY is such a *different* day
From all the other days—
I do such different kinds of things
And play such different plays.
Up to the queer old Chapel, first,
To Sunday-school I go,
And there learn Bible stories
Which I already know.

Then sev'ral miles to church we drive
All in our Sunday things—
Across the graves and out to sea
The cheerful church-bell rings.
We sit so far toward the front
We never dare be late—
I love to hear my Grandpa sing
And see him pass the plate.

And when it comes to sermon-time
Which I can't understand,
I watch the window where the Christ
Looks down, with lifted hand;
I look across the shining bay
All crinkled with the breeze,
And up into the still, blue sky,
And flowering locust trees.

And after we have gone back home
And dinner all is done,
Then I would like to go and play
And have a little fun,
But Grandma says "No games to-day!"—
—Then Katie comes, and we
Go out for hours among the woods
To see what we can see.

And sometimes it is windflowers,
And sometimes bloodroot white,
And sometimes it is arbutus
Half hidden out of sight.
And sometimes it is puddingstones
And sometimes velvet moss—

But always we are happy there
And never come back cross.

Then, after tea we read awhile,
And when I've gone to bed—
When I am safely tucked away
And all my prayers are said,
Katie upstairs, and Grandpa down,
They both begin to sing,
And as I drift away to sleep
I hear their voices ring—

"From Greenland's Icy Mountains,"
"Nearer, My God, to Thee,"
"The Church's One Foundation,"
"Jesus Loves Even Me"—
And that's the very last I hear.
And this is why I say
I *like* my Sundays different
From any other day!

GRANDMA'S GAMES

GRANDMA declares she's very old—
A hundred, if the truth were told—
But I don't think she is at all,
For winter evenings, in the hall,
When I am lonesome, after tea,
She plays such lovely games with me,
And if she were that old, I know
She *couldn't* play—she'd be too slow—
But up and down the room we go:

"Come Philander, let's be a-marching,
Everyone his true love a-searching—
If you cannot find your lover,
Turn again, and take another."

And sometimes, when she's feeling spry,
She likes to run, and so do I,
So all across the hall we fly:

"I'm on Dixie's land—
Dixie isn't home—
Dixie's got a sore toe,
And *he* can't come!"

And oh! the nicest game we play
Is much too good for every day,
For sometimes (Grandpa helps us, too,)
We play all "Cinderella" through!
But Grandma says I'm sure to find
A *real* step-mother would be kind,
So when she's cruel, we always say:
"A *real* one wouldn't act that way."
And when the shining prince comes in,
Then the exciting times begin—
And after all the slipper fuss,
Then Grandpa has to marry us;
Grandma's the prince; she takes my hand,
And very solemnly we stand,
While Grandpa, with an awful frown,
A broomstick on the floor puts down,
And Grandma and her blushing bride,
We jump that broomstick, side by side,
While Grandpa thus the knot has tied:

"Follow the old Colonial Law,
And marry the Injun to the squaw!"

And Winter evenings after tea,
Wouldn't you like to come and see
The games my Grandma plays with me?

THE FOUR SEASONS

1. Spring

NOW is the time when the marshes ring
With the peeper's bell-like song of Spring,
And the weeping willows begin to show
A green-gold fringe, and the pale shad-blow
Stands like a ghost, in the Schoolhouse Woods,
And the skunk-cabbage shows its purple hoods,
And the pussy-willows their silver sheen.
The far hills are veiled in a haze of green,
On the northern hillsides, close to the ground,
The fairy arbutus may be found,
And the sun dances over a laughing bay,
And I take my coat off, when I play.

Used through the courtesy of Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt and Edward S. Curtis

WHERE THE MEADOW GRASS IS HIGH (QUENTIN ROOSEVELT)

2. Summer

The sun is as hot as hot can be,
And it draws the scent from the big box-tree
Where I have my playhouse. Old Irish lies
Out on the porch, and snaps at flies.
The locusts sing in the maple trees,
And the leaves *just* move in the weary breeze,
And out where the meadow grass is high
The mowing machine goes whirring by.
And the shutters are shut, so the sitting room
Is a place of cool, sweet-scented gloom,
With the smell of the bowl of mignonette
And heliotrope, on the table set—
And under the blazing sun, the bay
Lies as still as glass, through the long, still day.

3. Autumn

The chestnuts are dropping, one by one—
Down in the garden, the flowers are done.
The apples are heaped in the cider mill,
And the evenings fall with a sudden chill.

The leaves lie thickly along the street,
And I love to kick them beneath my feet,
The maples are crimson, and pink, and gold,
And the crows alongshore are growing bold.
And from over the hills and far away
A cold wind ruffles the steel-blue bay.

4. Winter

The back of the house is banked about
With salt hay, to keep the North Wind out,
And if Grandmother lets me go out at all
She wraps me up in the big old shawl.
The apple orchard is gray and bare,
With a wizzled apple, here and there;
Sometimes the ground with snow is white,
And sometimes hard and frozen tight—
Ice on the pond and everywhere,—
And you see your breath in the frosty air.
And in the evenings, Grandpa sits
And reads to Grandma, while she knits—
And all the boats are put away
From off the dark and icy bay.

SHELLING PEAS

HEAR the peas go tinkling
Like raindrops in the pan!
Get the bottom covered
As quickly as you can—
All of us together
As busy as the bees—
Ain't it fun, when Aunty
Let's us shell the peas!

Keep the pods together
In a tidy pile,
We'll feed 'em to the chickens
In a little while—
Now we've done a panful
As quick as you could sneeze—
Haven't we helped *splendid,*
Shelling all those peas?

THE GARRET

UP in the garret the roof comes down
So low that I bump my head,
And a curious smell of dust and wasps
From under the eaves is shed.

The rafters are rough with the marks of the ax
And the shingles curl with age,
And on hooks here and there, great bunches hang
Of catnip, and thyme, and sage.

There are bags of flax, there are candle moulds,
A reel, and a hetchling bench,
And beds that are corded across with ropes
Screwed up with a queer old wrench.

Two big wool wheels, and three for flax,
And a bookcase of strange brown books—
And bags and bags full of clothes and rags
Swing down from the handwrought hooks.

I like to go up there when Aunty goes
But not by myself, at all,
For wasps and mice—yes, and rats!—might
come
From down by the chimney wall.

But when Aunty goes, then I tag behind
And play I am very bold,
And I spend whole mornings in finding out
What the chests and the ragbags hold.

GETTING DRESSED

GRANDPA has harnessed Jack and Bob
Up to the Rockaway—
We're going to Matinecock
To spend the day.
Grandma has on her grenadine,
And Katie's after me
To dress me up. I know too well
What *that'll* be!

I'll have my shoes with shiny toes,
And my new summer hat,
And a clean dress, but that's no harm—
I don't mind *that!*
I like my dress, and pretty sash,
I think they're perfect dears,
I don't mind clothes, but *how* I hate
To wash my ears!

THE DEAR OLD GRAN'

THE dear old Gran' is very black,
And Mar'gret is her name—
I wouldn't care if she was *pink,*
I'd love her just the same!
She takes me up into her lap,
And calls me "po' Miss Mame."

The dear old Gran' makes ginger cakes
And sugar cookies too.
She lets me help her grease the pans
And stick a broomstraw through
The cakes, to see if they are done.
I love her; wouldn't you?

The dear old Gran' ties up her head
In a white turban thing.
She wears long-sleeved red flannel shirts
Both Summer-time and Spring,
Because of mis'ry in her back
Which hurts like anything.

THE DEAR OLD GRAN'

The dear old Gran' gets awful cross
If I forget to show
All my new clo'es, and shoes, and hats,
It hurts her feelin's so—
She says "Miss Mame is gittin' proud"—
But she knows better, though.

The dear old Gran' is very old—
She says she has a plan
To go away and leave us soon—
I don't see how she *can!*
I don't see quite how we could *live*
Without the dear old Gran'!

THE HIGH TIDES

MOST every Autumn, when the storm
They call the "Line storm" comes,
With howling wind, and slanting rain
That on the tin roof drums,
Grandpa comes in the north-side door
And slams it with a pull,
And shakes himself, and stamps, and says,
"Well, Tom, the cellar's full."

Oh, then what fun!—at least, for me—
The rest are not so glad—
They do not like the cellar full,
It seems to make them mad—
So Grandpa gets his rubber boots
And Uncle Tom gets lights,
And Frank gets washtubs, and they go
To "set the place to rights."

I sit upon the cellar stairs,
And watch them splash around—
You see, the tide comes washing in,
And soaks up through the ground,

And makes our cellar like a lake
With everything afloat,
So in a washtub each man sits
And paddles like a boat!

They sail around securing things—
I watch their lanterns glow,
Up in the dark, and then again
Reflected down below.
They look like pirates in a cave
Upon a lake of ink—
Wouldn't I like to scuttle Frank
And make his washtub sink!

But on the steps I quietly sit
And watch them bump around,
And play it is a flooded mine,
Or robbers underground,
And when they've rescued everything
From off the cellar floor,
The washtub fleet turns home again
And paddles safe to shore!

THE SQUEAKY CHAIR

A QUEER old rocking-chair there stands
Right by my little bed,
It has a cover on the back
With yellow flowers, and red,
And when I have been *very* good
And said my prayers all right
I go to Katie, and I say—
"Rock me to sleep, to-night?"

(I'm awful big to rock to sleep,
I'm nearly half-past five.)
Then Katie says "Why, Baby's back,
As sure as I'm alive!"
But *then* she takes me on her lap,
Although my legs hang down,
And laughs, and says "Now, Baby dear,
We're off to Sleepy Town!"

THE SQUEAKY CHAIR

"Eenk—awnk, eenk—awnk," the old chair
goes,
It has an awful squeak.
"Eenk—awnk, eenk—awnk." I try to talk,
But I—forget—to—speak.
"Eenk—awnk, eenk—awnk," the old chair
says.
From some place far and deep
I hear it call "Eenk—awnk—eenk—
awnk——"
And then

I
go
to
sleep.

(Published in *The Wildman Magazine.*)

CLOUD CASTLES

I LIE on my back, looking up at the sky
And watch all the different clouds go by,
And wherever they wander, they seem to grow
Like the towns and the country down below.

One is a church with a steeple tall,
And one is a castle, with ruined wall,
One is a mountain, and one a tree—
Or that is the way they look to me.

And there, where a bit of the sky shows through,
Is a valley, that holds a lake of blue;
And that tiniest cloud, that goes so fast
Is a wee little boat, a-sailing past.

I could lie on my back in the grass all day,
And watch while the clouds fly by in play—
I wonder if children I cannot see
Lie up in the clouds and look down at me?

THE WISE PLAYMATE

I LIKE to play by my lonesome self,
Because I know *how* to play—
And when other children come around
I have to *show* them the way.

I can be a princess with golden hair,
And a jailer, cruel and grim,
And as for the prince, you'd better believe
I know *just* how to act like *him!*

I talk to myself, and scare the cook,
Because I know what to say—
The other children say stupid things
Not at all in the story way.

I can be a soldier, all full of cuts,
And a doctor to sew him up,
And a pretty nurse, in a snowy cap
With medicine in a cup.

So I play by myself, and talk to myself,
And when I am grown quite big
I shall be a cook, *and* a captain bold
Like the crew of the "Nancy" brig!

MY CATS

I GUESS I have pretty considerable cats—
I can't quite remember 'em all—
For two or three couple o' kittens are wild,
And hide in a hole in the wall.

There's Bupsy, the yellow one, tags me around
Like a dog on the end of a string;
And Little Me-Eye I have tried hard to train,
But I can't teach that kitten a thing!

And Big Tige is no kind of father to have,
For he chased Little Tige up a tree,
And clawed the poor thing on the end of his tail
Till he really was awful to see!

Then Dixie, he lives with the chickens and
ducks,
And Pussina White sleeps on my bed,
And then in the ice house there's six or
nine more—
But Norval, the cross one, is dead.

I think there are more, but I can't be quite
sure—
Aunty says there are "any amount"—
And they mostly sit 'round in the sun by
the shed
So I guess I'll go out there and count.

THE BANTY HEN

THE banty hen is awful cross,
She picks like anything,
She takes the skin right off my legs,
And goodness! don't it sting!
And once, when I was kneeling down,
She grabbed me by the nose,
And maybe you don't think *that* hurt!—
—She's nervous, I suppose.

And if you do a gentle dance,
And shuffle with your feet,
She dances, too, a reg'lar jig
You'd find it hard to beat.
She waves her wings, and spreads her toes,
And prances up and down,
And picks, and picks your shoes and legs,
And pulls you by the gown.

She hides her eggs 'most anywhere—
I steal 'em, when I'm bad,
And mix 'em up to make mud pies,
Which makes the hired man mad.
He wants a clutch of banty chicks,
And, really, I do, too,
But I can't seem to *help* but steal
Those cunnin' eggs—could you?

But if I leave the eggs alone
(I'll do it, if I can)
Or, if I take them, one by one,
To Frank, the nice hired man,
I'll have a *lot* of banty hens
From out those cunnin' eggs—
But oh! suppose they *all* should take
To pickin' my poor legs!

THE CORN-SHELLER

THE corn-crib stands on four tall legs,
As high as I can reach—
An old tin pan, turned upside down,
Is on the top of each.

No rats nor mice can clamber up
Across those guardian tins,
And oh! the glories you will find
Within the safe-kept bins!

Crimson and gold the long ears lie,
And through the cracks and chinks
In dazzling streaks across the piles
The winter sunlight blinks.

And in the sheller, ear by ear,
The hired man lets me drop
The corn, while he turns 'round the wheel,
And never lets it stop.

Oh, how can anyone be cross,
Or sit around and mourn,
When they could have a nice hired man
And help him shell the corn!

THE BOAT HOUSE

HOT summer sun, and a smell of tar,
Little bare feet on a sandy floor,
Oars, and nets, and a half-done spar,
And the harbor shining outside the door.

Glorious corners for hide-and-seek—
Glorious dunnage stowed away—
Oar-locks, pulleys, and bits of rope—
Just the things for a youngster's play.

Golden sun on the living green
Of the salt thatch waving along the beach,
Wash of the ripples, and gleam of sails,
And the oystermen shouting each to each.

And you fall asleep on a ragged seine,
And dream you're afloat on a summer sea,
Or sailing your ship on the Spanish Main—
Till Grandmother wakes you in time for tea.

CAP'N

NOW *Captain, he's* the rooster,
But *Cap'n's* a different thing—
All me and *Captain* ever do
Is sit around and sing,
But *Cap'n, he's* the nicest man
That ever dug a clam,
And everywhere that Cap'n goes
I follow like a lamb.

Cap'n, he wears big rubber boots,
And rows around the bay,
And sails our boat, and runs our launch
To pass his time away—
He never seems a busy man
Although he works so hard—
He always stops and talks to me
When I am in the yard.

He knows the way you ought to tie
A thousand kinds of knots;
He lets me dabble all around
His paint and varnish pots;
He lets me help him paint the boats,
And stuff the cracks with oakum,
And when I smashed the oars, he laughed,
And never told I broke 'em.

And when he goes to dig for clams
He lets me get a hoe
And fill my own small kettle full
And don't I *love* to go!
While *Captain*—well, he's very nice
But then he's not a man,
And can't amuse me quite as well
As dear old *Cap'n* can!

HORSEFOOT CRABBING

IN the golden sunset, when the shining bay
Lies as smooth as looking-glass at the close of day,
Katie gets the oars out, Nellie gets the boat,
And off we go a-crabbing, three bold thieves afloat!

On her face lies Nellie, on the broad stern seat,
With me, to keep her in-board, sitting on her feet;
Katie does the rowing, Nellie dives and grabs
Shoulder-deep in water, after horsefoot crabs.

None of your side-traveling, common crabs are these—
Like a big brown horse-shoe, they walk straight off, with ease,

And oh! their tails are lovely, spiky, long and stiff,
Just the thing to grab them by, and land them in the skiff!

They walk along the bottom, so dignified and slow,
And in the shallow water we can see them as they go,
And Nellie watches carefully, and hardly ever fails
To reach them as they scuttle off, and catch them by their tails.

When the bay grows silvery, and vanished is the sun,
Home we go, like fisher-folk, all our labor done—
Oh, pity the poor children who have never known our bay,
Nor gone to fish for horsefoot crabs at close of summer day!

Used through the courtesy of Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt and Edward S. Curtis

IN THE STRAWBERRY PATCH (ARCHIE ROOSEVELT)

THE STRAWBERRY PATCH

WHEN Uncle is not looking—
The best of times, perhaps,
Is when the sun is high and hot,
For then he takes his naps—
I hurry to the garden gate,
And struggle with the latch,
And get inside, and scuttle quick
Down to the berry patch.

There grow the biggest berries
That ever yet were seen,
In long green rows, all orderly,
With salt hay in between,
And of all the ways to eat them
The very nicest way
Is to sit there in the broiling sun
Upon the sweet salt hay.

Perhaps you think *cold* strawberries
Are lovely, but they're *not,*
They're fifty thousand times as good
All sunny-sweet, and hot—
Yes, getting in the berry patch
Is quite the best of fun,
But oh! when Uncle sees me,
Don't I have to cut and run!

THE WOODSHED ROOF

IF you are bold, and have no fear,
And hold adventure high and dear,
Oh, come and put it to the proof
A-sliding down the woodshed roof!

You first shin up a pile of wood,
(I hope your gathering strings are good!)
And, if you reach the top alive,
Upon a flat roof you arrive.

There you may stop, and breathe a space
Upon that lovely resting place,
And *then* you scrabble, claw and crawl
Up to the tip-top roof of all!

I find it is a noble plan
To wear my rubbers when I can—
I hate 'em, every other time,
But my! how nice they help you climb!

Then you sit down, right at the top.
. . . Then, the first thing you know, you
stop!
Bang! where you started from before!
. . . Then you crawl up, and slide some
more.

Then Grandma says in grave reproof,
"You've been a-sliding down the roof!"
How do you b'lieve my Grandma knows?
—She tells it by my underclo'es!

(Published in *The Housekeeper.*)

KEEWAYDIN

OVER the hills,
And across the bay
The wind is blowing
The fog away—
Over the harbor
The white-caps foam—
And the Nor'-West Wind
Brings the sea-gulls home.

The pines are roaring
A windy song,
And the gusts are blowing
The leaves along,
The sky is the bluest
That ever was seen—
The Nor'-West Wind
Sweeps the whole world clean.

The white-caps fly
    Like fairy ships,
And the salt of the spray
    Is on my lips—
Of all God's winds
    I love the best
The Home-Wind, blowing
    From sheer Nor'-West!

THE LAND OF HEART'S DESIRE

OUT in the swamp where the lilies bloom—
The tall red lilies like fairy fire—
And where the flag-flowers are blue in spring,
That is the Land of Heart's Desire.

There in the brook there are speckled trout,
And holes where my feet go sinking down,
Shining, pebbly, shallow rifts,
And pools and binnikills, still and brown.

Then there are spots that you have to jump,
And fat green hummocks on which to land—
Waving cat-tails, and meadow pinks,
And pussy-willows on either hand.

And somewhere a black-snake as big as me
(Or very nearly) has made his den—
And when I remember that he is there
Oh, *how* I run to get home again!

But I mostly forget him. I love my swamp
Where the cardinal flowers lift their slender
fire—
Grandmother says it's a dirty hole,
But *I* call it my Land of Heart's Desire.

THE BLACKSMITH

BESIDE the little brook that flows
Through my Land of Heart's Desire
The blacksmith has his grimy shop,
And tends his glowing fire—
The shop has such a funny smell
Of hot iron, hoofs and smoke
I really think the blacksmith can't
Be quite like other folk.

There all day long the horses stamp
And farmers come and go,
And all day long, among the sparks
The red-hot horse shoes glow—
I shouldn't think a horse would like
His shoes nailed to his toes,
But Grandpa says it doesn't hurt,
And Grandpa always knows.

Some times the blacksmith hammers out
A ringing, shining tire,
And rolls it in my sparkling brook
To cool it from the fire,
And sometimes Grandpa stops with me
When we are driving 'round,
And makes him look at Midget's shoes,
And give the nails a pound.

The blacksmith is the *dirtiest!*
His face is never clean,
His hands, his apron, and his shirt
The blackest ever seen.
But Sundays, what do you suppose?
In church I often see
The blacksmith, dressed in real man's clo'es,
As clean as he can be!

THE GARDEN FLOWERS

THE first little flowers that I find in Spring
Are the Bluebells—I listen to hear them ring,
But they never seem to. And next I see
White Violets, down by the chestnut tree—
Then come Daffodils, gay and tall,
And Sea-Pinks, all over the low stone wall—
Then, in the garden, when Summer comes,
When the fairy humming-bird whirs and hums,
Come Johnny-jump-ups, and Roses, too,
And sweet Clove Pinks, and the Larkspur blue,
And the Lady's Slippers, whose funny seeds
Go *pop!* when you pinch them. Among the weeds

By the Seckel pear tree, the Mandrakes grow,
And over the fence Nasturtiums glow,
And every flower that a perfume sheds
Grows thick and sweet in the long, straight beds;
And backwards and forwards between the rows,
With her basket and scissors, my Aunty goes—
Then Artemisias, the last of all
Bloom golden and brown in the frosty Fall.

THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

FROM the top of the Bluff, where the wind blows free,
Clear out to the edge of the world I see,
And I look and look, till my eyes grow dim,
But I can't see what lies over the rim!

I see the steamers go in towards town;
I watch the schooners sail slowly down—
Down out of sight, and far away—
Oh! I shall sail over the rim, some day.

Over the rim, and far beyond,
To Hong-Kong, and Bagdad, and Trebizond,
And Ceylon's Isle, where the breezes blow,
And the Happy Harbor, where good ships go.

And it may be bad, or it may be fair,
And I may come back, or I may stay there,
But one thing is sure—be it gay or grim,
Some day—some day—I must cross that
rim!

"CHRISTMAS BY THE SEA"

ON Christmas Eve we always go
Through frost and cold, through ice and snow
Down to the church, and there we see
Oh! such a shining Christmas tree!

In front of it, a manger low—
Like that in Bethlehem, you know,
And there we put our gifts and toys
For all the orphan girls and boys.

And then the sweet loud bell is rung,
And prayers and carols said and sung,
Then come our presents off the tree—
And *then* comes "Christmas by the Sea!"

No other children ever sing
Our song of sailors wandering;
They do not know it, far away,
But only here, beside the Bay.

It is a little song which tells
How *we* have Christmas lights and bells,
But how, at sea, each lonely bark
Sails on in silence, and the dark.

But how, by riverside and Bay
And everywhere, 'tis Christmas Day,
And even sailors, far at sea
Remember Christmas happily.

Then homeward, through the frosty air
Beneath a clear, cold Heaven, where
The still, bright stars are shining down
As once they shone o'er Bethlehem town—
And oh! I love the Christmas tree
And our *own* Christmas, by the sea.

THE PLAYMATE OF NAZARETH

LITTLE Lord Jesus, Who used to play
With the children of Nazareth every day,
Look down from Heaven, oh Playmate mild,
And hear the prayers of a little child.

As You used to help Your dear father work
Teach my little fingers not to shirk
And as You used to play when Your work was done,
Be near, and watch over my work and fun.

You know all the woes of a little lad,
So help me and comfort me when I am sad—
But You used to be laughing and cheerful, too,
So make me a happy child, Lord, like You.

Little Lord Jesus, Who played, like me,
On the shore by the lake in Galilee,
Take care of a little child I pray,
And help me remember You every day.

(Published in *The Evening Mail Saturday Magazine.*)

WHERE THE BROWN WOOD ROBINS SING

THE GRAPE-VINE SWING

THE leaves are green above my head,
And brown beneath my feet
Where they have lain for years and years,
A carpet deep and sweet,
The sunshine sprinkles through the boughs
And brown wood-robins sing,
While I go sweeping through the air
On the wild-grapevine swing.

The long, straight cable dangles down
From a tall chestnut tree—
It's plenty strong enough to hold
A heavy girl like me—
I grab it tight with both my hands
And wrap my legs around,
And like a pendulum I swing,
Far, far above the ground.

THE GRAPE-VINE SWING

I push off from a little hill
And sway out from the slope—
Not like a quickly-flying swing
Made out of boards and rope,
But out—far out—a long, slow sweep
The great vine makes, until
It stops, and brings me slowly back
To touch the little hill.

Sunlight, green leaves, and shadows dance,
And sweet wood-robins sing,
While I sway, dreaming to and fro
On the wild grape-vine swing.

THE DEAR PEOPLE

THERE'S Aunty Baker, who always makes
Dear little scallopy patty-pan cakes
Just as cunnin' as they can be,
And puts *pink sugar* on top, for me!
Nicholas Bennett, bent and gray
Goes to his garden every day
Up the Cove, with his stout old cane,
And I trot with him along the lane.
Katherine comes to our house and cleans,
Bunches asparagus, shells the beans—
Anything, almost, she can do!
And she tells me tales about Ireland, too.
Teddy Regan, *he* goes to sea
And he brought a parrot home to me,
And a bag made of wonderful knotted strings,
And a sandal-wood box for my sewing things.

When I have sick and sorry days
Dear Mrs. Townsend comes and stays,
And hugs me up close against her breast
Until I forget the ache, and rest.
And then Frank Hall knows how to tap
The maple trees, to get the sap
And lets me have some, so I can
Boil syrup in my little pan.
Oh, there are dozens more I love—
Katrina Carll, from up the Cove;
The three black "Aunties," tall and fine,
Aunt Julia and Aunt Caroline
And plump Aunt Gusta—and all three
Always so good and kind to me;
Cap'n John Hawx (but oh, disgrace!
He *will* swear when he sails a race!)—
I can't *begin* to tell you, though,
All the dear people that I know,
But *I* remember every name
And love them dearly, just the same!

COUSIN ARNOLD'S MILL

SOMETIMES with Grandfather I go
Up past the schoolhouse hill
And down along the little lane
To Cousin Arnold's mill,
And while they talk of grown-up things
Like "middlin's," "grist," and "bran,"
I run to see the mill-wheel turn
As quickly as I can.

Along beneath the cool green trees
The cool green mill stream flows,
Then through a long gray wooden flume
Down to the wheel it goes;
The wheel is green with shining moss
And fringed with tiny ferns,
And glittering drops of silver spray
Fly from it as it turns.

I love to hear it turn and turn
With gentle creak and drip—

Then from the cool, and green, and quiet
Into the mill I slip,
And there—oh! such a whizz, and whirr,
And clatter, buzz, and jar,
Within the white, flour-dusted room
Where the great mill-stones are!

The whirring belts fly, overhead;
The golden wheat runs down;
And at my feet the great gray stones
Grind steadily around,
And flour is over everything
Like fine, soft-powdered snow—
Why, even Cousin Arnold's clothes
Are white from top to toe!

When I grow up, it's hard to tell
What I would like to be—
Sometimes I think a blacksmith brave,
Sometimes a man at sea,
But when I think how white the flour,
How cool the stream and still,
How swift the stones—I'd like to live
In Cousin Arnold's mill!

THE YELLOW STAGE

I KNOW that in the city streets
Horse-cars go jingling up and down,
And omnibuses, green and gay,
Madly career about the town,
But I am sure that nowhere else
In this or any other age
Was there so grand a wagon seen
As Amos Boerum's yellow stage!

On every week-day, rain or shine,
(On Sundays, Amos goes to church)
To meet the early morning train
The stage starts off, with jolt and lurch,
With creak and rattle, bounce and bang,
Up the long street it makes its way—
The two old horses jog along,
The yellow paint shines brave and gay.

Then home again at noon it comes
Important with the daily mail,

And back to meet the evening train—
Why, if the yellow stage should fail
The skies would fall, I'm very sure!
It matters not how hot the sun
How hard the rain, how deep the snow,
The yellow stage is sure to run!

But oh! upon the Glorious Fourth,
Comes its most splendid trip of all
For then the band, with fife and drum,
Blare of trombone, and bugle call,
Comes forth to celebrate the day
And makes a gorgeous pilgrimage
From house to house for miles around
In Amos Boerum's yellow stage!

Clash, clash the cymbals, beat the drums!
"Gem of the Ocean," how we roar!
"Star-Spangled Banner," how it floats
With horn and fife, from door to door!
Bang, bang the bass drum! here she comes!
Columbia's grandest equipage—
The spirit of our bravest brave
In Amos Boerum's yellow stage!

DOWN THE BLUFF

IF you would prove that you are made
Of real true hero stuff
You go on Sunday afternoon
And run down Cooper's Bluff!

Across the fields where cedar trees
Stand up like grenadiers,
And through the woods, you take your way
In spite of secret fears.

You stand upon the Bluff's high edge,
While with a joyous roar
Down dash the bigger boys and girls
Who have been down before.

Far, far below the harbor shines,
It looks at least a mile,
You don't see *how* the others face
That prospect with a smile!

You wish you were that Oak Neck man
Who on a shovel sat
And *coasted* gaily down the Bluff!
You think you *might* do *that!*

You start. You jump. You plunge. You hop.
At first you think you'll fall—
But then you gallop madly on—
It isn't bad at all!

And then on Sunday afternoons
You find it fun enough
To take *new* children out, to try
The run down Cooper's Bluff!

BED-TIME SONG

SHUT tight, Starry Eyes!
The stars are opening in the skies
And they will watch over the world, to-night,
While you are hiding your amber light.

Rest, rest, Butterfly Hands!
The white moths are out in shimmering bands,
And they will be busy among your flowers
While you are quiet for a few short hours.

Be still, Twinkling Feet!
The wind comes whirling along the street,
Into the East; out of the West—
He dances, while you lie still and rest.

And out, far out, on the wings of a dream,
Fly, Little Soul, like a white moon-gleam,
Till the sun comes out of his hole—and then
Quick! Little Soul, come back again!

IN THE COVE

THERE'S a hill above the harbor
Which ebbs and flows beneath it there—
A small hill, a grassy hill,
The path is rough and steep;
The pine-trees sing above it,
And creeping vines enwreath it there—
The little quiet hilltop
Where the Colonel lies asleep.

The circling seagulls wheel above
When winter gales blow over it;
The song-birds build their nests there,
And rabbits run and play;
The locust-trees drop scented flowers,
And moss and myrtle cover it,
And the wind brings whiffs of sea-salt
From the white-caps on the bay.

Close, close within the heart of home
The soldier lays him down at last;
Deep in the quiet Cove he loved
The hunter is at rest;
The Heart of all the Nation sleeps
Upon our tiny hill at last,
While all the trumpets sound for him
Beyond the shining West.

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THE END

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